



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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To: Local and Intermediate School Superintendents, Public School Academy Directors, Nonpublic Schools

From: Mike Flanagan

Subject: 50th Annual Professional Development and Great Lakes Regional Social Studies Conference

The 50th Annual Professional Development and Great Lakes Regional Social Studies Conference will be hosted by the Michigan Council for the Social Studies (MCSS). The conference will be held January 30, 31, and February 1, 2006 in Grand Rapids, Michigan at the Amway Grand Plaza/DeVos Place. This year, MCSS is partnering with the International Studies Department of the University of Michigan in bringing exemplary presentations and speakers to the conference. This year's theme is *Preparing Global Citizens-Promoting Literacy, Environmental Stewardship and Cultural Awareness*.

The efforts you and your staff are making to teach social studies and to increase achievement in social studies scores is to be commended. This conference will offer solid information and speakers to help you accomplish your goals in student achievement. Research indicates that the factor most directly related to improvement in student achievement is quality professional development.

There will be over 180 sessions showcasing the latest teaching strategies for kindergarten through the university levels. Preconference Clinics include *How to Read Social Studies*, *Social Studies Integration*, *Using National Centers as a Resource* and some sponsored by publishers. Special conference sessions on the Michigan Curriculum Framework are designed for first-year teachers and preservice/undergraduate students who will receive gratis the popular *Toolkit for Creating Responsible Citizens* and special sessions on strategies to involve parents in the educational process by distributing materials for use with families. Several sessions will distribute quality resources worth hundreds of dollars such as the award winning *The Power of Good* and *The American Promise*. Michigan Department of Education staff will also present sessions providing the latest updates on the Michigan Merit Examination, History Themes revisions, World History assessment requirements for high school, Grade Level and Course/Content Expectations and the new Social Studies MEAP. Educators will have the opportunity to earn State Board Continuing Education Units (CEUs) at all sessions. During the conference, the largest state display of educational materials will be available for examination.

The January 31st luncheon will honor teachers and students for their contributions to social studies education. The evening program will feature a performance by the nationally known *Capitol Steps*. On February 1, at 11:30 a.m., will be a luncheon when MCSS will honor State Senator Wayne Kuipers, Chair of the Senate Education Committee and Michigan Department of Education Chief Academic Officer/Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Jeremy Hughes for their efforts to improve education in Michigan.

I urge your school district to consider participating in this outstanding conference. It will make efficient use of tight financial resources. Applications are available on the Michigan Council for the Social Studies web site at <http://www.michcouncilss.org/>. If you have questions, please call 734 975-2811.

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324